

thing that proves to be first-class in intrinsic worth ought not to be tolerated in the category of second-class matter. Since the publication of the Religion of Science Library, consisting of some of the works of the foremost philosophers of mankind : Descartes, Hume, Berkeley, Kant, Leibnitz, Locke, etc., etc., are unequivocally first-class, it seems to be a matter of course that when they travel in the mails they should not pay second-class postage, but according to such a standard they ought to go by letter rate, first-class.

Now, we can do one of two things : Either we can quietly submit, or we can try to overthrow the ruling of the postal authorities. If we do the former, we by no means recognise the justice of the ruling, but simply yield because the expense of the other course would be too great, and the benefits to be gained therefrom are too small. The Religion of Science Library is not published for gain, but for the accommodation of the public, and it is by no means a mine of wealth. The privilege of the reduced postage rate granted to second-class matter plays an important part in the plan of its publication. The reduction of the postage is only one consideration ; the saving of time and labor through the facility of paying the cost of carriage in one bill, doing away with the stamping and weighing of each single package, is probably more important.

The public which we serve is at any rate limited, nor is it organised to exercise any political pressure, consisting mainly of professors, teachers, students, clergymen, etc. Yet the reduction of labor to the Post Office in handling the second-class mails, caused by the exclusion of these books, will prove a drop in the bucket only.

We shall continue, however, to serve the public as well as we can under the changed conditions, but we shall be obliged in all cases to add to the regular prices of the books the cost of carriage. The old numbers shall be sold at the stated price, merely adding thereto the postage for carrying them through the mails as ordinary printed matter.

P. C.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GĀYATRĪ.

The Countess Evelyn Martinengo-Cesaresco's¹ article on the *Aum and Gāyatrī* is an interesting contribution to the history of our knowledge of Sanskrit literature and the Brahman religion. It is natural that any Hindu Samnyasi would be reluctant to initiate foreigners into their ceremonies or to recite to them their most sacred prayers. But Sir William Jones might have found the text of the Gāyatrī more easily and without any special sacrifice, if he had known that it was contained in the Rig-vedas, where we find it in Book III., 62, 10.

The Gāyatrī is the most sacred prayer of the Hindus and takes about the same place in their religion as the Lord's Prayer does in Christianity. It is addressed to the sun, and Sir Monier Monier-Williams calls it "that most ancient of all Aryan prayers, which was first uttered more than three thousand years ago, and which still rises day by day toward heaven, incessantly ejaculated by millions of our Indian fellow-subjects."

The ancient Indians worshipped many divine powers, but the true gods of the period of the Veda were three ; First, the fire god, the earth-born Agni ; secondly, the rain god, the earth-born Indra ; and thirdly, the sun god, the sky-born Sūrya,

¹The Countess Evelyn Martinengo Cesaresco is a granddaughter of Sir E. C. Carrington. and is thus in a position to verify the data concerning Sir William Jones's discovery of the Gāyatrī.

or Sâvitri. This triad of gods presided over the three worlds, the earth, the air, and the sky. The worship of the sun has almost entirely died out in India, for there are very few temples or shrines dedicated to the sun in any part of that country. The most celebrated temple at Konârak (for Konârka, "corner-sun,"), in Orissa, now lies in ruins; while the temple of the sun at Gaya stands neglected. Nevertheless, there are reminiscences of solar worship left even to the present day in the daily prayers of the Hindus, and the most sacred among them is the Gâyatri. Every pious Hindu of whatever sect pays homage to the rising sun every morning by repeating this brief prayer:

"AUM!

That essence which transcends the sun,
The light divine let us adore.
May of our minds it be the guide!"

The prayer, though still reverencing the sun, points beyond to something greater, to that light which is the guide of our mind and of which the sun is a mere symbol. Visâmitri¹ is named as the author of these beautiful lines; or as the Brahmins would say, its *rishi*, i. e., seer or discoverer; for the poem is divine, it existed from all eternity, but remained unknown until it was revealed to mankind through the prophetic inspiration of Visvâmitra.

At the midday service, another invocation of the sun, the Sûryâ-sûkta,² is repeated by many Hindus, which is considerably longer than the Gâyatri, and its character may be determined by the following fragment which we quote in Sir Monier Monier-Williams's translation:

"Behold the rays of dawn, like heralds, lead on high
The Sun, that men may see the great all-knowing God.
The stars slink off like thieves, in company with Night,
Before the all-seeing eye, whose beams reveal his presence,
Gleaming like brilliant flames, to nation after nation.
Sûrya, with flaming locks, clear-sighted god of day,
Thy seven ruddy mares bear on thy rushing car.
With these thy self-yoked steeds, seven daughters of thy chariot,
Onward thou dost advance. To thy refulgent orb
Beyond this lower gloom, and upward to the light
Would we ascend, O Sun, thou god among the gods."

India is the classical country of the religio-philosophical development of mankind, and the Gâyatri is the great landmark on the road from the ancient sun-worship to a purely philosophical conception of the deity.

THE FIRST CHRISTIANS ACCORDING TO F. J. GOULD.³

F. J. Gould is one of the most active authors among the English rationalists of the present day, and the present book shows him at his best. He is not a believer

¹ It is a remarkable fact that Vosvâmitra was not a Brahman but a Kshatriya; he did not belong to the priestly but to the warrior caste, which is an evidence of the truth that progress in a certain line is not always made by the profession but is forced upon the profession by outsiders. Cf. also Garbe's *Philosophy of Ancient India*, p. 57 ff.

² The Sûryâ-sûkta, recorded in the Rig-veda, I., 50, has been translated by Prof. A. Weber in *Ind. Studien*, v. 177 ff. The same hymn described the marriage ceremony of Sûryâ, daughter of the sun, to Soma, here probably the personified moon, which is the reason why it is also used in marriage ceremonies.

³ *The Religion of the First Christians*. By F. J. Gould. Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London. 1901. Pp., 143. Price, 2s. 6d.